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Making sense of the world

# THE WEEK

## Junior



THE BEST MAGAZINE FOR CURIOUS KIDS

2025 Summer of Reading

# The 50 Books KIDS LOVE MOST

Your summer reading adventure starts now! Check out our amazing book list, enter to win prizes, and more! **p12**







# This week's big news

**"MAY I PLEASE..."**

During the bee, spellers can ask for a word's definition, part of speech, and language of origin and to hear the word used in a sentence.



Faizan Zaki at the bee finals

## Championship words

abseil  
psammophile  
moorhen

The winning words in the 2024, 2023, and 2022 bees were **abseil** (a descent in mountaineering by looping a rope over something above), **psammophile** (an organism that prefers or thrives in sandy soils or areas), and **moorhen** (the female of a bird species called the red grouse).

# Teen wins historic spelling bee

Faizan Zaki, a 13-year-old from Texas, was crowned champion of the Scripps National Spelling Bee on May 29. It was the 100th anniversary of the bee, which was held outside Washington, DC, and was broadcast on television.

## What is the bee?

The Scripps National Spelling Bee, which began in 1925, is the nation's most prestigious spelling competition. It's open to students who haven't turned 16 or finished eighth grade. At the event, competitors take turns trying to spell a word no one else has attempted. First they must pronounce it correctly, then spell it out loud within two minutes. If they spell it correctly, they remain in the bee. If not, they are eliminated. Bee officials include Jacques A. Bailly, who has been the event's head pronouncer since 2003, and Mary Brooks, who has been the head judge since 2005. Although it was the bee's 100th anniversary, this was the 97th contest overall. The event was canceled from 1943–45 during World War II and in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. To celebrate the anniversary, organizers created a special web page, a museum exhibit, and a book titled *Beeloved* that included historical photos, behind-the-scenes stories, and

profiles of past winners. Previous champions were also invited to attend the finals of this year's bee.

## How does the competition work?

During the academic year, 11 million students from more than 23,000 schools compete in bees in their classrooms. Top performers advance to school, county or district, regional, and statewide competitions. Winners go to the national rounds. This year, 243 spellers ages 8 to 14 reached the nationals. Last year's event was decided by a spell-off, a tiebreaking feature introduced in 2022 in which contestants spell as many words as possible in 90 seconds. This year, the competition rules were changed and judges could let competitors keep taking turns in the final round before going to a spell-off.

## Who is Faizan Zaki?

Zaki, a seventh grader, previously competed in the bee three times, starting at age 7. He made the semifinals in 2023 and came in second in 2024. He is known for being passionate about words and language while also having fun studying and competing. Zaki drew attention for his joyful and dramatic performance, which included calling a bee official "bro." For this year's win, Zaki received \$52,500, a medal, and the Scripps Cup trophy.

## What happened in the final round?

Nine competitors reached the last round, and soon Zaki and two other contestants were left: Sarvadnya Kadam, a 14-year-old from California, and Sarv Dharavane, an 11-year-old from Georgia. Kadam and Dharavane both misspelled words, leaving Zaki two correctly spelled words away from a win. But he missed his next word, "commelina," bringing Kadam and Dharavane back to the stage. Zaki eventually outlasted his opponents and won by correctly spelling the word "éclaircissement," which means "a clearing up of something that is difficult to understand." After saying the final letter, he pumped his fists and collapsed onto the stage as confetti rained down. "I don't know what to say, I'm just really happy," Zaki said. He was the fifth champion in the bee's history to win the title after previously claiming second place. Kadam finished second, and Dharavane placed third.

## What will happen next?

Zaki said that with last year's winnings, he treated himself to a Rubik's Cube with 21 squares on each side. This year, he will donate much of the prize money to charity. For the past 14 years, the bee has been held in Maryland, but in 2026, it will return to Washington, DC, where it was held for much of its history. The event will take place at Constitution Hall, a historic venue near the White House.





## Muslims make holy pilgrimage

From June 4 to 9, an estimated 1.8 million Muslims (people who follow the religion of Islam) from around the world will gather in Mecca, a city in Saudi Arabia. There, they will perform an annual pilgrimage known as the Hajj.

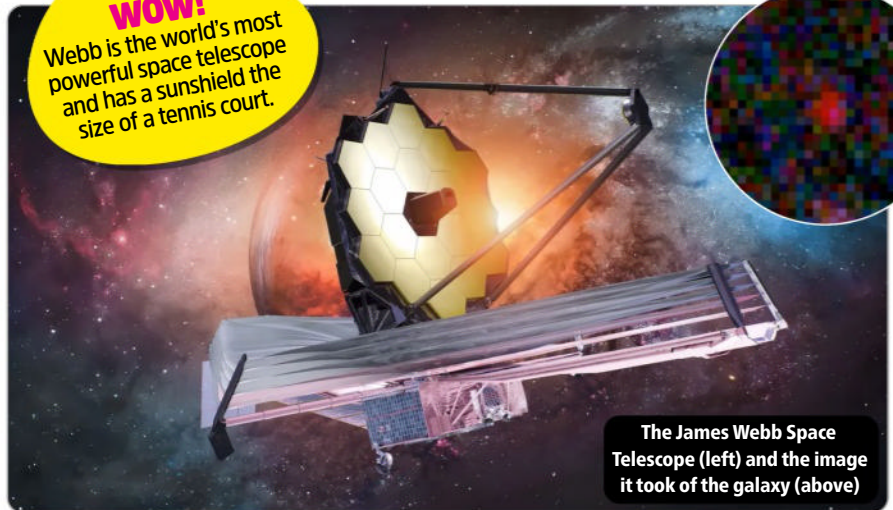
Muslims consider Mecca the birthplace of the prophet Muhammad, the founder of Islam. The Hajj is one of five pillars of the religion, and every Muslim who can make the journey is expected to complete it at least once in their lifetime. Attendees perform rituals, including walking seven times around the Kaaba, a cube-shaped shrine in the middle of the city's Grand Mosque (place of worship). The Hajj ends with Eid al-Adha, when people share meals and exchange gifts.

Last year, pilgrims at the Hajj endured temperatures as high as 125° F. More than 1,300 died due to the heat. This year, authorities have provided shaded walkways and more access to water. The dates of the Hajj are set by the Islamic calendar, and beginning in 2026, it will not fall during peak summer in Mecca for 16 years.



Pilgrims gather in Mecca.

**WOW!**  
Webb is the world's most powerful space telescope and has a sunshield the size of a tennis court.



The James Webb Space Telescope (left) and the image it took of the galaxy (above)

## Oldest, farthest galaxy observed

The James Webb Space Telescope (also known as Webb) has spotted the oldest and most distant galaxy ever observed. Called MoM-z14, the newly identified galaxy existed 280 million years after the universe was created about 13.8 billion years ago. That makes it at least 20 million years older than the previously known oldest galaxy, which was also spotted by Webb.

Webb is operated by NASA (the US space agency), with support from the European and Canadian space agencies. It launched in December 2021 with the mission of seeing farther back into space and time than ever before and observing faraway planets for signs of life. Light from other galaxies takes billions of years to reach the telescope, which means Webb is capturing them as they once existed

all those years ago. Light from MoM-z14 is just reaching Earth and Webb now.

Since its launch, Webb has spotted more bright, ancient objects than scientists anticipated. Before its launch, there was only one confirmed galaxy, GN-z11, from the first 500 million years of cosmic history. Scientists predict that Webb will one day find galaxies even older than MoM-z14.

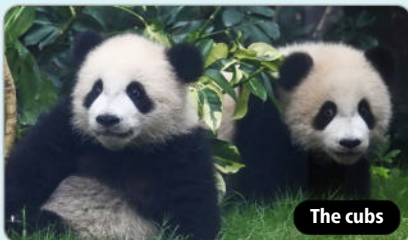
Each discovery of an ancient galaxy helps researchers gain a greater understanding of the universe's earliest history. "At the moment, [MoM-z14] is the most distant object known to humanity," Pieter van Dokkum, a scientist at Yale University in Connecticut who helped identify MoM-z14, told Space.com. "That title changes every so often, but I find it is always cause for pause and reflection."



## IT'S AN AMAZING WEEK FOR...

### CHOOSING NAMES

Say hello to Jia Jia and De De! After receiving more than 35,000 entries in a public contest, animal park officials chose names for the first giant pandas ever born in Hong Kong. The female and male were born last August.



The cubs



Kami Rita Sherpa

### CLIMBING SKY HIGH

Kami Rita Sherpa, a pro climbing guide from Nepal, reached the peak of Mount Everest for the 31st time. Sherpa, age 55, beat his own record for the most ascents of the world's tallest mountain, which he set last year. He is "a global symbol of Everest itself," said the company he works for.

### A STRONG SWIM

Lewis Pugh, age 55, became the first person to swim around the island of Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts. Pugh, who swam 62 miles over 12 days with boats nearby to keep him safe, undertook the feat to raise awareness for shark conservation. "Sharks are really threatened and...we need to be protecting them," he said.



Lewis Pugh





## DID YOU KNOW?

Our Children's Trust was founded in 2010 to support young people in asserting their rights to a safe and livable climate.

Plaintiffs (including Eva Lighthiser, right) in the Held v. State of Montana court case in 2023

## Who is Rikki Held?



In 2020, at age 18, Rikki Held (above) was the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit Held v. State of Montana. The court ruled in her favor, leading to greater environmental protections in Montana. Now age 24, Held, a plaintiff in Lighthiser v. Trump, is a college graduate and is teaching in Kenya through the Peace Corps.

# Youth climate activists sue government

A group of young people have filed a lawsuit (legal dispute) challenging President Donald Trump's executive orders on climate and the environment. The lawsuit, filed in a federal court in Montana, argues the orders are unconstitutional.

## Who filed the lawsuit?

The 22 plaintiffs (people filing the lawsuit) range in age from 7 to 25. Most are from Montana, although some live in Hawaii, Oregon, and other states. They are represented by Our Children's Trust, a nonprofit legal group that has won two climate-related court victories in recent years. In one case, Held v. State of Montana, the Montana Supreme Court ruled in favor of the young people. It said that Montana's energy policies had violated residents' constitutional

right to a clean environment. The lead plaintiff in that case was Rikki Held (see box above), who is also a plaintiff in the new legal filing.

## What is the lawsuit?

The lawsuit argues that three of Trump's executive orders violate the plaintiffs' Fifth Amendment rights to life and liberty by infringing on their health, safety, and future prospects. The young people say they are already experiencing harm due to wildfires and hurricanes brought on by climate change and that Trump's orders will make the conditions worse. For example, one of Trump's orders allows a coal plant in Montana, which emits more harmful matter into the air than any other power plant in the US, to be exempt from pollution rules. Several of the plaintiffs live near the plant.

## How did people react?

Julia Olson of Our Children's Trust said the executive orders are an "abuse of power" that put "young people's lives in danger." Eva Lighthiser, the 19-year-old lead plaintiff, who was also a plaintiff in the Held case, said the lawsuit was necessary to stop the coal dust that blows across her town, among other reasons. "My health, my future...are all on the line," she said. White House spokesperson Taylor Rogers defended the executive orders, saying they will boost the nation's economic and national security.

## What will happen next?

The plaintiffs are asking the court to prevent the three executive orders from going into effect. A judge will begin hearing the case later this year.



## WORD OF THE WEEK

### GALAXY

The Milky Way is composed of a vast number of stars that appear close together. The name is a translation of *galaxias kuklos*, "the milky vault," because the ancient Greeks thought the broad streak of light resembled the color of milk, *gala*. This is how we got the English word "galaxy," which at first referred to the Milky Way but now describes any system containing millions of stars.



## THE WEEK IN HISTORY

### June 17, 1885

#### Statue of Liberty arrives in New York

On June 17, 1885, the Statue of Liberty arrived in New York City aboard a French ship. A gift from France to the US, it came in more than 300 pieces and had to be put together. At the time, the statue was brown because, like the early penny, it was made of copper. The metal's exposure to the weather over the years turned the statue into the green color we recognize today.



The Statue of Liberty under construction





Elon Musk

## Elon Musk leaves administration

Billionaire business executive Elon Musk, who leads companies such as Tesla and SpaceX, has left the Trump administration as a senior adviser. On May 30, he reached the limit of 130 days that a person can work for the government without pay. He had been overseeing the White House's efforts to cut federal spending. Some praised his work, while others said his actions could end up costing the US money due to lost productivity.



A gray wolf

## Wolf packs sighted in California

Wildlife officials have announced the discovery of three wolf packs in northeastern California. Since 2015, the state's gray wolf population has been on the rise, due to efforts to protect the species, which is endangered. There are now a total of 10 wolf packs in the state. Gray wolves are native to California, but they were nearly wiped out by humans 100 years ago.



The actors

## Harry Potter TV series casts leads

The actors who will perform as the main characters in HBO's live-action *Harry Potter* TV series, set to start filming this summer, have been announced. Acting newcomers Dominic McLaughlin (above, center) will play Harry Potter, Arabella Stanton (left) will play Hermione Granger, and Alastair Stout (right) will play Ron Weasley. More than 32,000 children auditioned for the role of Harry, HBO said.



**WOW!**  
In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a record-breaking 600-foot rainbow flag was marched through the city to kick off Pride Month this year.

People participating in a Pride march in New York City

# Pride Month celebrated across US

The US and more than 100 other countries kicked off Pride Month on June 1. The month celebrates and advocates for fair treatment of people in the LGBTQ+ community.

The first Pride march took place in June 1970. It marked the one-year anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising, a major event in New York City that caused people to come together to advocate for the civil rights of LGBTQ+ people. In 1978, the rainbow Pride flag was created for the Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco, California. Since then, rainbow flags have become a symbol of the movement. President Bill Clinton was the first US President to recognize Pride Month in 1999.

In the US, Pride Month is coming at a challenging time for many people in the LGBTQ+ community. In May, Utah passed a law prohibiting government buildings and schools from displaying the rainbow flag. Idaho and

Montana passed similar laws, and about 17 states have introduced bills with the same goal. Fewer companies are also sponsoring Pride events. Some Pride organizers said these decisions were in response to the federal government's opposition to programs that promote DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion), including those for LGBTQ+ people.

Pride celebrations are still being held throughout the US, and millions of people are expected to take part. Events set to take place on June 8 included a rally at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC; the Los Angeles Pride Parade in California; and a festival in Charleston, South Carolina.

One of the world's largest

Pride parades, which typically draws at least 2 million people, is scheduled to take place in New York City on June 29. This year's theme is "Rise Up: Pride in Protest." The city of San Francisco will host its Pride celebration and parade on June 28 and 29.



Rainbow flags symbolize support.

## THE WEEK'S SILLIEST HEADLINE

**"Elephant seal wanders into residential neighborhood" UPI**







# Around the world



**Fires in Flin  
Flin, Manitoba**



## Manitoba, Canada

### Thousands leave homes to avoid fires

About 17,000 people in the Canadian province of Manitoba and thousands more in Alberta and Saskatchewan have been evacuated because of more than 188 wildfires that have broken out. Hot and dry weather is causing the fires to spread quickly, releasing smoke across Canada and parts of the US. On May 31, the US Forest Service said it was sending 150 firefighters and equipment to Canada to help battle the fires.



**The village  
of Blatten**



## Blatten, Switzerland

### Village destroyed by glacier collapse

Most of the Swiss village of Blatten has been destroyed by an enormous avalanche of ice and rock. Prior to this, all the residents had been evacuated because scientists warned that a section of a glacier above the village was likely to break off and cause an avalanche. "An unbelievable amount of material thundered down into the valley," said Matthias Ebener, a local spokesperson.



**Sidi  
Ould Tah**



## Abidjan, Ivory Coast

### African bank selects its next president

Sidi Ould Tah has been elected the new president of the African Development Bank (AfDB), an international financial organization that aims to reduce poverty, improve living conditions, and boost development in Africa. Tah, who is from Mauritania, was elected with 76% of the vote at a meeting in Abidjan on May 29. He will take over the job on September 1.



## Bruges, Belgium

### Stones are not souvenirs

Officials have asked tourists to stop taking the cobblestones from the streets of a medieval city. "Walking in Bruges means treading on centuries of history. Please leave these stones where they belong," said local politician Franky Demon. The city loses up to 70 cobblestones a month, he said, costing about \$21 per square foot to replace them.



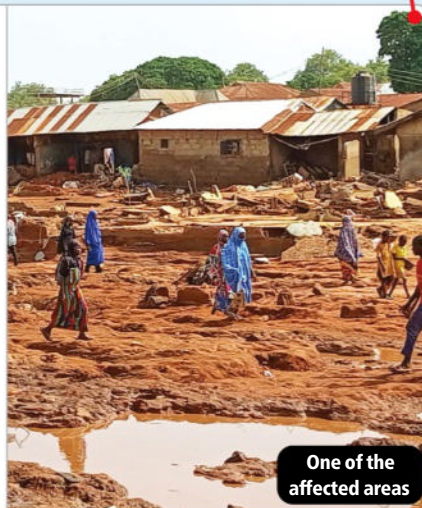
**A cobblestone  
street in Bruges**



## Mokwa, Nigeria

### Area hit by floods

More than 700 people are believed to have died after heavy rain led to severe flooding in the town of Mokwa. The rush of water destroyed buildings, damaged roads, and forced more than 3,000 people to flee their homes. The floods are said to be the worst in the area in 60 years. On June 1, the country's National Emergency Management Agency said it had begun giving out aid packages to people who were affected.



**One of the  
affected areas**

GETTY IMAGES (8); SHUTTERSTOCK; BLUE MOUNTAINS CITY COUNCIL



# Around the world



The orchestra performing



## Vienna, Austria Classical song sent into space

On May 31, a famous piece of music called The Blue Danube was played by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and beamed into space. The event was part of a celebration for the 200th birthday of composer Johann Strauss II, who was born in Vienna. Using a large radio antenna in Spain, the song was sent toward the Voyager 1 space probe.



Solar panels at a green energy station



## India Green energy milestone reached

According to official reports, India has achieved record growth in generating power from renewable sources such as wind and solar energy. From April 2024 to April 2025, the country produced 30 gigawatts of clean energy—enough to power about 18 million homes. Over the past 10 years, India has invested \$81 billion to switch away from coal power, with a goal of meeting 50% of its energy needs with planet-friendly sources by 2030.



Tokyo residents avoid the Sun to stay cool.



## Tokyo, Japan Plan to help residents cool homes

Authorities in Japan's capital said the city will help pay residents' water bills this summer. With lower bills, officials hope residents can afford to cool their homes as temperatures rise. In 2024, Tokyo's hottest summer on record, some people got heatstroke after keeping their air conditioners off to save money. Governor Yuriko Koike said, "We would like to create an environment in which all Tokyoites can live in peace" despite the heat.



Children pet the MetaCats.



## New South Wales, Australia Robot cats visit local libraries

Two life-size robotic cats, known as MetaCats, are touring libraries across Australia's Blue Mountains. With soft fur, eyes that light up, and sensors that allow them to react to human touch and speech, the cats are designed to provide comfort to children and people with mental health conditions. After their tour, they will stay at two local libraries to bring joy to visitors.



## Marseille, France New Banksy art

Banksy, a famous street artist, has created a new work of art on a street in Marseille. He painted a lighthouse on a wall that lines up with the shadow of a metal post on the pavement. It also has the words, "I want to be what you saw in me." Banksy, who has never revealed his real name or identity, is known for creating art that has political messages. The anonymous artist posted the image on social media, confirming it was his work.



The artwork





# Is it better to read before bed?

Some people prefer relaxing with a book as they wind down their day.

## What you need to know

- Teenagers need about eight to 10 hours of sleep each night. But according to a study by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, they get about six.
- Research has shown that readers who spent time with a book before bed reported having better sleep.
- A study by Scholastic found that 86% of parents wish their children would spend less time in front of a screen, and 83% thought it was important for their children to read for fun.

**PICTURE PERFECT**  
Orbis Sensualium Pictus, published in 1658, is considered the earliest children's picture book.



If you like to curl up with a book and lose yourself in a story, chances are you also have a favorite time of day to read. For some readers, that's first thing in the morning, when they're refreshed and energetic. It can be a great way to kick-start the day. Others pick up a book once they're done with their homework or right after dinner. But many people prefer to wait until bedtime, when the world around them falls silent and nothing comes between them and their book. They say there's nothing better than drifting into sweet sleep with a fun story, quirky characters, and colorful images in their head. What do you think? Is it better to read before bed?

## Yes—it's very relaxing

Reading a book at night is definitely better than watching TV or scrolling on your phone. The light from those devices can disrupt your body's natural internal clock and affect your sleep patterns. Reading, on the other hand, has been proven to promote good sleep by slowing down your heart rate and relaxing your muscles. It's a great feeling to fall asleep reading after a long day of school, sports, and other activities. And reading before bed is also great for your mental health because it calms your mind and distracts you from your worries. That's especially helpful for people who have trouble falling or staying asleep.

## No—it can be distracting

Not every book should be read at night. A thriller or page-turner could be too engrossing and tempt you to stay up past your bedtime. Then you'll just lose sleep! Starting your day with reading, however, gives you an incentive to get a good night's sleep and read when your mind is fresh. You can read during the day, too, such as during recess if you want a quiet moment to yourself or after school. Either way, reading during the day means you'll get more out of the book. If you read when you're sleepy, you can miss important plot points or themes—or even forget them when you doze off and have to reread pages the next day.

**YES**

## Three reasons it is better to read before bed

- 1 Books at bedtime are better than screens, which can disrupt your body's natural clock and sleep cycle.
- 2 Reading a book at night can help your body slow down and settle in for sleep.
- 3 Nighttime reading is great for mental health and helps people who have trouble falling or staying asleep.

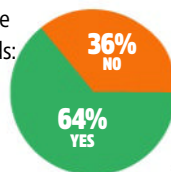
**NO**

## Three reasons it is not better to read before bed

- 1 It depends on what you're reading. If it's too engrossing, you might be solving mysteries in your head instead of sleeping.
- 2 There are many great moments for reading during the day, whether it's in the morning, at recess, or after school.
- 3 Reading when you're tired can cause you to miss or forget important story details.

## LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if children should be allowed to use AI. Most of you think it's an acceptable option for kids: 64% of you said yes, and 36% said no.



## What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit [kids.theweekjunior.com/polls](https://kids.theweekjunior.com/polls) so you can vote in our debate. Vote **YES** if you think it's better to read before bed or **NO** if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

**The goal of the big debate** is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.





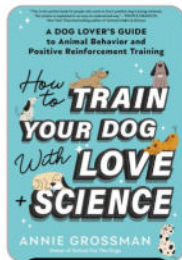
# Training with heart

Annie Grossman's approach to pet care is grounded in science and kindness.

Renowned dog trainer Annie Grossman has released her first-ever book on dog training, *How to Train Your Dog with Love + Science*. Drawing from years of hands-on experience, she offers a positive, research-based approach to help owners bond with their dogs while teaching them new skills.

Grossman grew up in New York City, where she still lives today. She always loved animals and had a dog-walking business in middle school.

Later, she became a journalist, writing for publications like *The New York Times*, where in the 2000s she was assigned an article about the rise of dog trainers. This inspired her to enroll in a training program. "I loved spending time with my dog and thought a job where I could learn about dogs would be pretty cool," Grossman told *The Week Junior*.



The new book

In 2011, she opened the acclaimed School for the Dogs in New York City. She closed it in January, but during its run she created a trainer coaching program and worked with thousands of dogs. She is now

a behavior specialist for rescue dogs at the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).

In her new book, Grossman shares her approach, which emphasizes that understanding dog behavior is the key factor in effective training. She offers owners tips and tricks on how to

identify certain behavioral signals, such as lip licking, which often signifies discomfort.

"We have these willing participants, sleeping in your bed and licking your toes," Grossman told *The Week Junior*. "Helping them better understand the world around them can be really exciting."

**PUPPY LOVE**  
Dogs—believed to be one of the first animals domesticated by humans more than 14,000 years ago—are the most popular pet in the US.



Annie Grossman with her dog, Poppy

## Artist's new exhibit

Jennie C. Jones is blending art and music with her new installation, *Ensemble*, on the rooftop of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Its three sculptures are made of varying materials in shades of red, with strings that hum when the wind blows. It was inspired by 19th-century Black rural musicians who built string instruments from everyday materials. In the exhibit, she honors that history while inviting visitors to explore how art and sound connect. Jones' show will be the last of the museum's popular rooftop series until 2030.



Jennie C. Jones

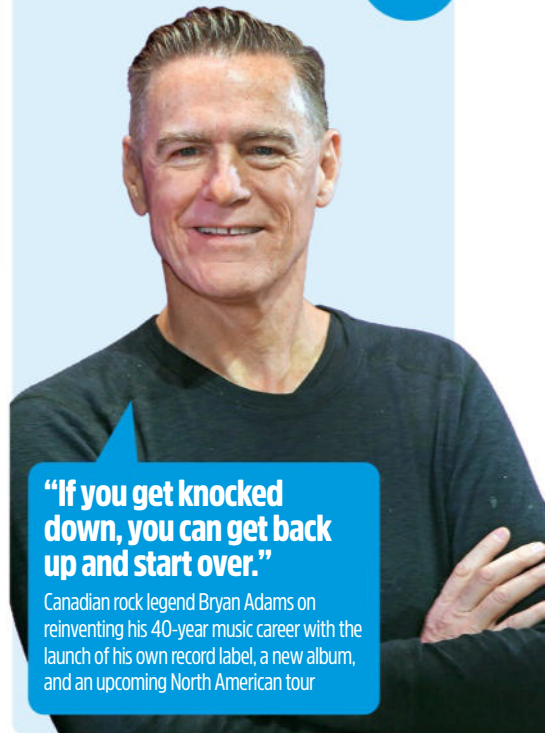


Leslie Odom Jr.

## Returning to a role

Nearly a decade after making his Broadway debut as Aaron Burr in the original cast of *Hamilton* in 2015, Leslie Odom Jr. is stepping back into the role for a limited run, from September 9 to November 23, in honor of the hit musical's 10th anniversary. In the show, created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, Burr is a politician and longtime rival of Alexander Hamilton. Odom's performance earned him a Tony (top theater award) in 2016 for Best Actor in a Musical. He called the return a "deeply meaningful homecoming" and said he is grateful to revisit a piece that "forever changed my life."

## OVERHEARD



**"If you get knocked down, you can get back up and start over."**

Canadian rock legend Bryan Adams on reinventing his 40-year music career with the launch of his own record label, a new album, and an upcoming North American tour





# Animals and the environment



## COLOR VISION

Most mammals can see two colors: blue and green. But primates can see three: blue, green, and red.

A mother and child stand with other bonobos.

## Caring about fairness

An experiment has revealed that bonobos notice unfair treatment. Two neighboring bonobos could exchange tokens for rewards, which were not always equal. If an ape received a lesser reward than its partner, it was less likely to continue participating.



Young bonobos

# Female bonobos build powerful alliances

Bonobos may be proof that there's strength in numbers—and working together can make all the difference. A new study showed that within the bonobo society, females bond together to assert and maintain power despite their limited size and strength. This leadership makes them rare among mammals.

Bonobos, a type of great ape, are one of the closest living relatives of humans. As with most primates, males are larger and stronger than females. Typically, the males' greater size and strength would result in domination of the troop (group of bonobos), choosing mates and controlling resources like food. But females appear to have taken control by

forming "girl squads."

The scientists examined research conducted over 30 years on six bonobo communities living in the wild in the Democratic Republic of

Congo. They looked for examples of times when two or more females teamed up while facing aggression by a male. Usually, three to five females formed a group together. Surprisingly, these alliances often involved members from different troops who had not been close friends beforehand.

Once they had joined together, the female bonobos often took action, such as screaming at the male aggressor and chasing him through the trees. This could prevent him

from attacking

the females or hoarding food. The researchers observed 1,785 conflicts between the sexes, with females winning 61% of them. Teaming up also seemed to put the females in a position of power. Although there were different levels of cooperation in each of the six communities studied, on average most female bonobos had a higher social rank than most males.

The researchers said it was exciting to find evidence that animals can achieve an unusual level of influence in their societies by supporting one another. This also suggests that apes—including humans and our ancestors—may have been using similar strategies to build power together for millions of years. Researcher Barbara Fruth said, "It gives me a glimmer of hope that females of our closest living relatives,



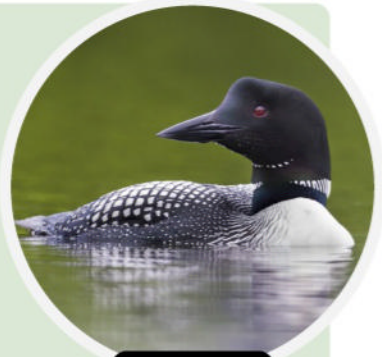
A male bonobo



## PLACE OF THE WEEK

Itasca State Park, Minnesota

Minnesota's oldest state park has a very special feature. North America's longest river, the Mississippi, originates there before flowing south to meet the sea. The park, which was established in 1891, also contains more than 100 lakes and thousands of acres of old-growth pine forests. Inside its boundaries, a wilderness sanctuary helps preserve native plants like orchids and cuckoo flowers that grow near Lake Itasca's shore. The park attracts many kinds of birds, including loons, owls, and hummingbirds. Visitors may also see beavers, deer, black bears, and wolves.



A common loon





## FUN FACT

Axolotls are named after Xolotl, the Aztec god of fire and lightning.

An axolotl



## Successful release of axolotls

**A**xolotls bred in captivity can survive—and even thrive—after being released into the wild, a team of researchers has discovered. These critically endangered amphibians are found in the wild only in Mexico City, so this successful reintroduction is a positive sign for the species.

In a new study, eight axolotls were released into an artificial wetland in Mexico City, and 10 were released into the city's Lake Xochimilco. The researchers tracked the creatures and found that all of them survived for at least 40 days. A checkup

showed that the axolotls had gained weight, which means they were effectively hunting for prey in their new habitats.

Animals that are raised in captivity don't always know how to find food and protect themselves in the wild, but this success brings hope that captive breeding programs can help the axolotl population recover. The findings are "really important for conservation," lead author Alejandra Ramos told *Science News*. Meanwhile, experts are also working to restore the amphibians' habitats and create new ones for them.

## Animal of the week

### Ronan the sea lion



A California sea lion named Ronan has astonished scientists by nodding in time to musical rhythms. Experts thought only humans and a few other animals had this ability. But in a recent study, Ronan outperformed people at keeping a beat.

- **LIFE SPAN:** About 15 to 30 years
- **HABITAT:** The Pacific Coast, from Alaska to Mexico
- **SIZE:** About 8 feet for males, 6 for females
- **DIET:** Fish and invertebrates such as octopuses
- **FUN FACT:** A male sea lion's call sounds like a dog's bark, but females make different sounds.



## Good week / Bad week



### European gray wolves

The gray wolf population in Europe has increased by more than 60% since 2012, a new study reported. The canines almost went extinct on the continent by the 20th century, but they've now recovered in many countries.



### Northern fulmars

Plastic pollution may be changing the way these seabirds survive, reproduce, and behave. Researchers found plastic in the birds' stomachs and discovered that it affected levels of certain hormones (chemicals in the body).



## "How are birds and pterodactyls alike?"

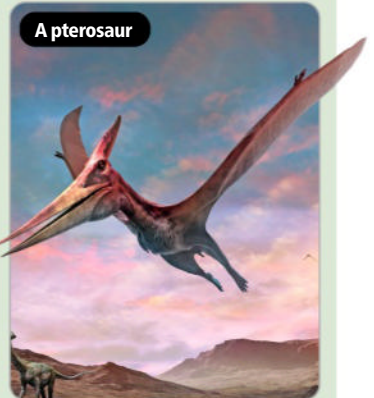
Eva, 8, Virginia

### Dr. Roger Benson

Curator of paleontology, American Museum of Natural History

Although not closely related, birds and pterodactyls, which are actually called pterosaurs, share similarities. First, both fly. Fossils show that pterosaurs had hollow, air-filled bones like birds do, and they were covered in hair-like structures similar to feathers. Like birds, many also lacked teeth.

A pterosaur



Do you have a question for an animal expert? Send it to [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com). Find out more about AMNH at [amnh.org](http://amnh.org).



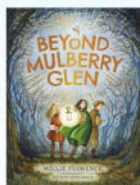


**Roller Girl**

# The 50 Books KIDS LOVE MOST

**The Week Junior** asked more than 200 children across the country about the books they loved so much that they would recommend them to other kids. We turned their picks into this one-of-a-kind list that features books in all your favorite categories. Get ready for a super summer of reading!

## FAVORITE FANTASIES & SCI-FI



**BEYOND MULBERRY GLEN**  
By Millie Florence,  
illustrated by  
Astrid Sheckels  
(Waxwing Books)

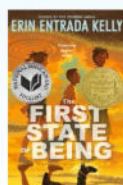
Eleven-year-old Lydia must leave her cherished home in Mulberry Glen to protect her family from evil forest dwellers. "I love this whimsical story about Lydia's struggle with change, and the powerful themes of light and darkness really empower me!" said Lola, 13. "This book feels like sunshine on rainy days." Ages 9+



**FABLEHAVEN**  
By Brandon Mull,  
illustrated by  
Brandon Dorman  
(Shadow Mountain)

A hidden refuge for mythical creatures, Fablehaven is under threat from evil forces. Unbeknown to Kendra and her brother, their grandfather is the refuge's caretaker. Setting out to save Fablehaven and their family,

"the characters show great energy and emotion throughout the book," said Charlie, 10. Ages 9+



**THE FIRST STATE OF BEING**  
By Erin Entrada Kelly  
(HarperCollins)

Calling it a "delightful blend of sci-fi and realism that's both funny and emotional," 11-year-old Luna recommended this time-traveling tale set in 1999. Ridge, a boy from 200 years in the future, suddenly appears at an apartment complex in Delaware. The life of a 12-year-old resident will never be the same. Ages 8–12



**THE GOOSE GIRL**  
By Shannon Hale  
(Bloomsbury Children's Books)

This retelling of a classic fairy tale in which a princess spends her first years learning the language of birds is pure magic. It remains true to the original while including new elements. "It's the best book ever," said Cora, 11. Ages 8–12



**GREENWILD**  
By Pari Thomson  
(Farrar, Straus and Giroux Books for Young Readers)

To find her missing mom, Daisy flees through a hidden doorway and finds herself

in a magical world. But someone wants to destroy it and prevent her from seeing her mother again. "The story is exciting, and the descriptions make you feel like you're actually there," said Phoebe, 9. Ages 8–12



**HARRY POTTER AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS**  
By J.K. Rowling  
(Scholastic)

The final novel in the seven-part blockbuster Harry Potter series proves to be the most exciting, according to *The Week Junior* panelists. The book not only contains the most battles (a highlight for 12-year-old Prarthana) but also brings many connections to light. As 11-year-old Landon said, "It's fun to be able to put all the pieces together from all the other Harry Potter books." Ages 10+



**A LIGHT IN THE MIST**  
By Erin Hunter  
(HarperCollins)

The Broken Code story arc to the popular *Warriors* series wraps up with an epic premise: All five clans of Warrior cats must join forces to fight an imposter. "I love all the *Warriors* books because of the creative storylines and characters, but this story especially has a lot of really good parts," said Rory, 11. Ages 8–12



**THE SON OF NEPTUNE**  
By Rick Riordan  
(Disney Hyperion)

The second book of *The Heroes of Olympus* series is a reader favorite because Percy Jackson reappears. There's a problem, though: Percy has lost his memory and has no idea how he ever made it back to



**Greenwild**

## Symbol key



**Series**



**Classic**



**Newbery Medal or Honor**

## Enter to win books!

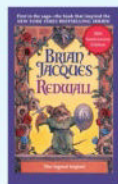
This summer, we challenge you to read three books. They can be from this list or they may be any books you choose. Once you've read them, with an adult's help go to [tinyurl.com/TWJUS-ReadingChallenge2025](https://tinyurl.com/TWJUS-ReadingChallenge2025) to enter our sweepstakes for a chance to win books. Five kids will win! All winners will be drawn at random. The deadline to enter is August 8.



# Summer of Reading



Camp Half-Blood. "The series gets exciting when Percy goes on adventures to get his memory back," said Caley, 13. **Ages 9+** 🟢



**REDWALL**  
By Brian Jacques,  
illustrated by  
Gary Chalk  
(Firebird)

A brave mouse needs to find a lost sword to protect his kingdom in the kickoff to this 22-book British series that was originally published in 1986. "It's an exciting adventure about medieval animals," said Graham, 10. "It's funny too." The series is famous for mouthwatering feasts that readers can practically taste through the pages. **Ages 8–12** 🟢🔴



**THE WISHING SPELL**  
By Chris Colfer  
(Little, Brown Books  
for Young Readers)

Twins Conner and Alex fall into the fairy-tale world in the first book of *The Land of Stories* series, a popular recommendation from *The Week Junior's* panelists. "I like how the author brings together well-known fairy-tale characters in a new way," said June, 10. The characters' adventures also engaged 9-year-old Charlie, who said, "This series makes you feel like anything is possible and takes any troubles away." **Ages 8–12** 🟢

## FAVORITE MYSTERIES



**TO CATCH A THIEF**  
By Martha Brockenbrough  
(Scholastic Press)

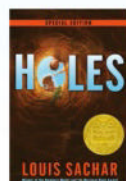
When someone steals the dragonfly staff that brings good luck to a sweet seaside town, 11-year-old Amelia and her stray dog have seven days before the important dragonfly festival to crack the case.

According to 12-year-old Tahra, "The winding clues and storylines will make sure the ending catches you by surprise." **Ages 8–12**



**DAYBREAK ON RAVEN ISLAND**  
By Fleur Bradley  
(Viking Books for  
Young Readers)

Three classmates find a dead body on an island during a seventh-grade field trip and miss their ferry back home. Stuck in the woods overnight, they try to solve the whodunit. "I like this author's writing style," said Cora, 11. (Look for other mysteries from Fleur Bradley too!) **Ages 8–12**



**HOLES**  
By Louis Sachar  
(Scholastic Gold)

Even though Stanley didn't steal a pair of shoes, he's found guilty and sent to a detention camp in the desert. There, he's forced to dig holes because a warden is secretly searching for buried treasure. Said 11-year-old Claire, "You can really feel what the characters are doing and thinking." **Ages 10+** 🟡🔴

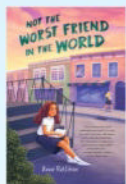


**THE LOST LIBRARY**  
By Rebecca Stead  
and Wendy Mass  
(Feiwel and Friends)

An 11-year-old's life changes overnight when a Little Free Library filled with weathered, old books suddenly appears in a small town. "The story has mystery, a cat, and every attribute I look for in a good book!" said Gerard, 9. **Ages 9–12**



**A Strange Thing Happened in Cherry Hall**



**NOT THE WORST FRIEND IN THE WORLD**  
By Anne Rellihan  
(Holiday House)

Lou is still upset over a falling-out with her best friend when she receives a mysterious note from another classmate. Cece confides to Lou that she thinks she's been kidnapped by her dad and wants help to find her mom. "If Lou can figure out the mystery, she thinks she has one more shot at friendship," said Evie, 10. But as Lou goes about her detective work, the situation turns out to be less straightforward than she anticipated. **Ages 8–12**



**PUZZLEHEART**  
By Jenn Reese  
(Henry Holt and Co.  
Books for Young  
Readers)

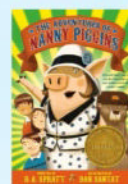
Perigee's grandparents built a bed and breakfast (a hotel in a house) but never opened it. Perigee hopes to find out what's causing the house's many frightful quirks, such as disappearing staircases and spinning knives. "This book is such a page-turner," said Jocelyn, 10. "It's really fun to try to solve the puzzle along with the characters." **Ages 8–12**



**A STRANGE THING HAPPENED IN CHERRY HALL**  
By Jasmine Warga  
(HarperCollins)

As a couple of kids take on the duty of solving the case of "Who stole the painting from the art museum?," the story becomes "super thrilling, clever, and heartfelt," said Grace, 11. She also reported that she was captivated by the book's descriptive language. **Ages 8–12**

## FAVORITE ADVENTURES



**THE ADVENTURES OF NANNY PIGGINS**  
By R. A. Spratt,  
illustrated by  
Dan Santat  
(Little, Brown  
Books for Young Readers)

"Funny, entertaining, and memorable" is how 11-year-old Avery describes this story about a former circus-flying pig who gets hired to watch three wild children. The pig, who has no babysitting experience, gets into many hilarious situations that may remind you of those in *Matilda* and other books by Roald Dahl. **Ages 8–12** 🟢



**THE GOLDEN COMPASS**  
By Philip Pullman  
(Alfred A. Knopf  
Books for Young  
Readers)

Full of "heart-pounding scenes," according to 11-year-old Luke, this awesome adventure story is the first book in the *His Dark Materials* series. An orphan discovers a truth-telling device while trying to rescue her friend who has been kidnapped. **Ages 10+** 🟢🔴



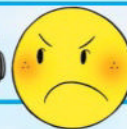
**ICEBERG**  
By Jennifer A. Nielsen  
(Scholastic Press)

It's 1912, and Hazel sneaks aboard the Titanic's voyage from England to New York in order to find work in America to support her mother and younger siblings who are in danger of losing their farm. Hiding in the cargo hold of the ship, she overhears crew members talking about a fire in the boiler room. Hazel, an aspiring journalist, starts to ask questions about the ship's safety, and her worst fears come true days later. Said 12-year-old Nash, "This book has a lot of action, and it's easy to follow." **Ages 8–12**





# Summer of Reading



Sisters



## THE WILD ROBOT ESCAPES

By Peter Brown  
(Little, Brown Books for Young Readers)

The second book in the three-volume series is "more like an adventure" than the others, according to Gael, 9. Her favorite character, Brightbill, is trying to locate Roz, the robot who raised him from the time he was an egg. Will they be reunited? Ages 8–12

## FAVORITE GRAPHIC NOVELS



THE DRAGONET PROPHECY  
By Tui T. Sutherland,  
illustrated by Mike Holmes  
(Graphix)

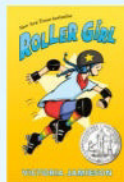
The first nine books in the best-selling Wings of Fire series have been turned into graphic novels, and *The Week Junior's* panelists are loving them. Whether you're new to the series or read the prose version of the first book, *The Dragonet Prophecy*, "it's fun to see how they're illustrated [as graphic novels]," said Kian, 10. Ages 8–12



FETCH-22  
By Dav Pilkey  
(Graphix)

The eighth book in the best-selling Dog Man series stood out as a favorite for *The Week Junior's* panelists. Dog Man and his Supa Friends have to save the world from

Barky McTreeface, a tree who is being controlled by 22 villainous tadpoles. "I like how the tadpoles make a song about Barky," said Rudy, 8. Ages 7+



ROLLER GIRL  
By Victoria Jamieson  
(Dial)

The summer before middle school, Astrid signs up for roller derby camp and has trouble keeping up with older campers. She's also growing apart from her best friend who went to a different camp. "This book reminds you that it doesn't matter if you fall," said Seraphina, 10. "The most important thing is picking yourself back up again." Margot, 11, also really likes the part where Astrid tries to get her mother to do dishes on roller skates. Ages 8–12



SISTERS  
By Raina Telgemeier  
(Graphix)

This wildly funny graphic novel memoir (story about the author's life) takes place during a road trip from California to Colorado. Raina and her little sister haven't been getting along, but something happens to help them realize that they have to put aside their differences. "I can relate to the problems the sisters are having because I have a sister of my own," said Sage, 7. Ages 7–12



SWIM TEAM  
By Johnnie Christmas  
(HarperAlley)

A girl who moves from New York to

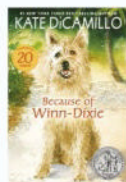
Florida makes a big splash in her new middle school. After learning how to swim, she joins the school's swim team with the goal of improving its lackluster record. "I love how the main characters learn about each other and find the best way to try to win the state championship swim meet," said Edith, 9. Ages 8–12

## FAVORITE REALISTIC FICTION



THE ACADEMY  
By T.Z. Layton  
(First Touch Books for Young Readers)

Leo is the star of the soccer team at his small school in Ohio. A professional scout offers him the chance to try out for one of 11 slots at a prestigious soccer academy in London. With match play-by-plays, "the book is great for kids who love sports," said Kian, 10. "The author has great descriptions of the characters' feelings and the action in the games, which make you feel like you are there." Ages 7–12



BECAUSE OF WINN-DIXIE  
By Kate DiCamillo  
(Candlewick Press)

A girl has a hard time adjusting to her new town until she finds a scruffy stray dog, whose outgoing personality helps her make connections. "I like this book because it tells the story of a girl who meets new friends in unlikely places," said Annora, 10. Ages 8–12



DIARY OF A WIMPY KID: SPECIAL CHEESIEST EDITION  
By Jeff Kinney  
(Amulet Books)

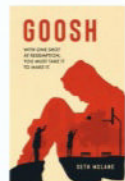
The fun, collectible

version of the first book in the blockbuster *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* series has a Swiss cheese theme, a nod to one of the story's most memorable moments. But that's not even the best reason to read it, according to our panelists. "Every single character gets in the way of Greg, the main character, which means that something new is always happening in the book," said Kai, 8. Ages 8–12



THE FORT  
By Gordon Korman  
(Scholastic Press)

After a hurricane rips through their town, five classmates discover a hidden trapdoor that leads to "the fort," an abandoned shelter filled with food and entertainment. "They keep it a secret," said Ryan, 10. For weeks, they use the fort as a place to escape their problems, but their hideaway is in danger of being revealed. Ages 8–12



GOOSH  
By Seth McLane  
(Eagle Pad Press)

When Isaac's mom gets diagnosed with cancer, the seventh grader tries to distract himself by shooting hoops at a local park. There, he meets a former professional player who winds up becoming a pivotal influence in his life. "This book is a great read with complex emotions, NBA fame, and healing," said Aleen, 11. Even if you're not a basketball fan, other plots in the story will keep you reading. Ages 10–14



Diary of a Wimpy Kid

## How this book list came together

To compile our list of 50 books, we asked children across the country to tell us what their all-time favorite books from different genres are and why. We also requested that our current and former Junior Council members share the books they love most. The books that received the most votes made it onto the list. It's full of award-winning reads with diverse characters, magical plots, and suspenseful moments—and proof that kids make the best book critics!





## Meet our Author Ambassadors

In the next five issues of our Summer of Reading challenge, keep an eye out for interviews with these award-winning creators. You can find them in our Book Club column on page 23.



### PABLO CARTAYA

It's evident from author and actor Pablo Cartaya's new release, *A Hero's Guide to Summer Vacation*, that he enjoys traveling around the country. The fast-paced fantasy adventure chronicles an epic 10-day road trip from California to Florida featuring a boy and his disagreeable grandfather.



### GRACE LIN

Author and illustrator Grace Lin received a Newbery Honor in 2011 for *Where the Mountain Meets the Moon*. Her latest illustrated fantasy adventure, *The Gate, the Girl, and the Dragon*, debuted in May to much acclaim. The characters are unforgettable!



### MEG MEDINA

The winner of the 2019 Newbery Medal for *Merci Suárez Changes Gears*, Meg Medina served as a National Ambassador for Young People's Literature in 2023–24. Her new, enchanting novel, *Graciela in the Abyss*, comes out in July. It's her first published fantasy book!



### SF SAID

*Tyger*, an action-packed novel from this acclaimed British children's writer, was named one of the best books of 2023 by *The Week Junior's* sister magazine in the UK. As *Tyger* makes its way to US shelves this month, SF Said will share how he came up with the concept of a magical animal who helps to save a troubled world.



### RITA WILLIAMS-GARCIA

From the time she was in kindergarten, Rita Williams-Garcia has loved to write. Her groundbreaking historical-fiction novel, *One Crazy Summer*, received a Newbery Honor in 2011. The book has recently been turned into a graphic novel, and Williams-Garcia will explain the transition.



### MAIZY CHEN'S LAST CHANCE

By Lisa Yee  
(Random House Books for Young Readers)

Maizy and her mom spend the summer in Last Chance, Minnesota, where her grandparents run a restaurant. "Maizy and her family encounter racist people who steal a treasured wooden bear from their Chinese restaurant and demand ransom for its return," said Kyle, 11. "The story is very heartfelt, with a touch of mystery." Ages 8–12 ★



### OUT OF MY MIND

By Sharon Draper  
(Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books)

Melody, a fifth grader, is far smarter than everyone realizes: "Even though she can't talk or walk because she has cerebral palsy, she joins the school math team," said Charlotte, 12. "I love that she doesn't let her disability stop her." When the math team competes in the championships in Washington, DC, Melody's photographic memory gives them an edge. Ages 8+ 🟢



### THE UNDERCOVER BOOK LIST

By Colleen Nelson  
(Pajamas Press)

When Tyson, the class troublemaker, is waiting for his school detention to start, he's sent to the library to choose a book to read. He finds a mysterious note that leads to an unlikely friendship with a book-loving classmate. "I couldn't put this story down," said Annabel, 10. "It teaches you not to judge or underestimate people." Ages 8–12

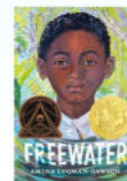
## FAVORITE HISTORICAL FICTION



### ALLIES

By Alan Gratz  
(Scholastic Press)

This fast-paced novel unfolds over the course of one day: June 6, 1944. That's when Allied forces freed France from Nazi control, a major step in ending World War II (1939–1945). This tale incorporates the perspectives of several young soldiers from various countries as well as two French girls. "It's great to learn about history from different points of view," said Luke, 10. Ages 10+



### FREEWATER

By Amina Luqman-Dawson  
(JIMMY Patterson Books)

Desperate for their freedom, two enslaved siblings in the early 1800s escape to a community called Freewater. But their mother gets left behind, and they won't feel at peace until they can rescue her. "Even though this book is about a difficult topic, it's an enjoyable read about history all kids should know about," said Mateo, 10. Ages 10+ ★



### MAX IN THE HOUSE OF SPIES

By Adam Gidwitz  
(Dutton Books for Young Readers)

With "a lot of action and funny moments," according to 9-year-old Gavin, this story about World War II (1939–1945) blends fantasy and historical fiction. A Jewish boy has to become a British spy to return to his parents in Germany, and a pair of magical spirits on his shoulders may be just what he needs. Ages 8–12 🟢



### J.D. AND THE GREAT BARBER BATTLE

By J. Dillard,  
illustrated by  
Akeem S. Roberts  
(Kokila)

When J.D.'s mother gives him the worst haircut, he takes matters into his own capable hands. He uses

clippers to reshape his hairstyle, and it turns out so great that other people request haircuts. He even opens a barbershop in his bedroom! "There are so many cool things about this book," said Hattie, 11. This story is the first of three in the J.D. the Kid Barber series. Ages 7–10 🟢







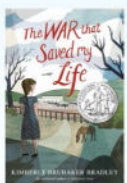
# Summer of Reading

**Scary Stories  
for Young Foxes**



**RED, WHITE, AND WHOLE**  
By Rajani LaRocca  
(Quill Tree Books)  
Set in 1983, this beautiful novel in

verse (poetry) centers on an Indian American girl whose mother is diagnosed with leukemia. All of a sudden, her concerns about boys, music, and dances are pushed aside. "It's an emotional journey told through stellar verse," said Fiona, 13. Ages 9+ ★



**THE WAR THAT SAVED MY LIFE**  
By Kimberly Brubaker Bradley  
(Dial)  
Ada's foot is twisted,

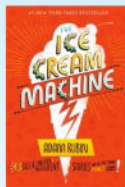
and her mom is so embarrassed by her disability that she keeps Ada locked inside. When her mother sends her brother to London during World War II (1939–1945), Ada escapes to join him. "This is my favorite book because it mixes facts with an interesting story," said Miriam, 12. "Ada is a great main character." Ages 8–12 ★

## FAVORITE SHORT STORIES



**GREEKING OUT: EPIC RETELLINGS OF CLASSIC GREEK MYTHS**  
By Kenny Curtis and Jillian

Hughes, illustrated by Javier Espila (National Geographic Kids)  
This retelling of 20 classic Greek myths is "full of gods, heroes, demigods, and mortals that will make you love mythology and history," said Ocean, 8. The book's dynamic, colorful illustrations make it even more enticing to read. Ages 7+ ○



**THE ICE CREAM MACHINE**  
By Adam Rubin  
(G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers)  
This book's six quirky stories, each

titled "The Ice Cream Machine," are as enticing as a banana split! Even though all the tales are written by one author, "they're extremely different," said Claire, 9. The topics range from alien encounters to an ice cream eating contest. Ages 8–12



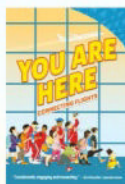
**ONCE UPON AN EID**  
Edited by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed, illustrated by Sara Alfageeh  
(Amulet)  
Fifteen authors each contribute a

joyful short story about Eid, a Muslim holiday that marks the end of a month of fasting. "This book has a variety of different perspectives on how Muslims celebrate Eid," said Malaika, 12. One tale even involves brownies! Ages 8–12



**SCARY STORIES FOR YOUNG FOXES**  
By Christian McKay Heidicker, illustrated by Junyi Wu  
(Square Fish)  
Eight interconnected stories focus

on two foxes who have to face monsters, zombies, and other adversaries to find a den of their own. "It has many plot twists, but everything ties together nicely at the end," said Seraphina, 10. Illustrations enhance the book's eerie feel. Ages 8–12 ★



**YOU ARE HERE: CONNECTING FLIGHTS**  
Edited by Ellen Oh  
(Allida)  
This book's enticing

premise hooked *The Week Junior* panelists. "It's about different kids

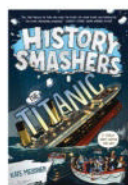
with different lives, but they're all stranded at a Chicago airport," said Lucy June, 9. Twelve popular Asian American authors each contribute a story, all of which have themes of identity and belonging. Ages 8–12

## FAVORITE NONFICTION



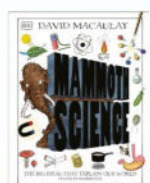
**GEORGE VS. GEORGE**  
By Rosalyn Schanzer  
(National Geographic Kids)  
This fascinating book explores the

American Revolution (1775–1787) from the perspectives of two leaders at the time: George Washington and King George III of England. "It's very informative," said Ryan, 10. It features many intriguing facts and quotes that you might want to share with your family. Ages 8–12 ○



**HISTORY SMASHERS: THE TITANIC**  
By Kate Messner, illustrated by Matt Aytch Taylor  
(Random House Books for Young Readers)  
Why is the Titanic, a famous

"unsinkable" ship from 1912, at the bottom of the ocean? The fourth book in the History Smashers series fills you in by using graphics, comic panels, and short blocks of text to make the information easier to understand. "This series tells you about how and why an event happened and uses many pictures," said siblings Ethan, 11, and Elizabeth, 9. Ages 8–12 ○



**MAMMOTH SCIENCE**  
By David Macaulay  
(DK)  
Science principles

like density, gravity, and reflection become much more understandable and fun in this guide. "It teaches

science in a way that is entertaining," said Naia, 10. "The illustrations make me laugh but still help me visualize what the author is saying." Ages 8+



**THREE CUPS OF TEA: THE YOUNG READER'S EDITION**  
By Greg Mortenson, illustrated by David Oliver Relin.  
Adapted by Sarah Thomson

(Viking Books for Young Readers)  
This inspiring story "shows that when one person is kind and generous, more people decide to be kind and generous," said Aalyah, 11. It focuses on Greg Mortenson, a mountaineer who needed to be rescued after a failed climb in Pakistan. He pledged to build a school and made good on his promise. Ages 10+



**WHO WAS MARIE CURIE?**  
By Megan Stine and Who HQ, illustrated by Ted Hammond  
(Penguin Workshop)  
This biography is packed with

fascinating facts about the childhood and professional life of scientist Marie Curie (1867–1934). "Marie made a real difference in science and to women!" said siblings Hennessy, 10, and Dorothy, 9. "We loved reading about the problems she encountered and her achievements!" Ages 8–12 ○

## Kids' favorite genres revealed

*The Week Junior's* readers told us they love to read about imaginary worlds the most.

**44%** Fantasy/science fiction

**32%** Realistic fiction

**11%** Mystery

**8%** Historical fiction

**5%** Nonfiction



**Mammoth  
Science**

The Week Junior • June 13, 2025





# My summer reading memories

Fill out this form so you can capture who you are as a reader right now! Save it in a special place and look at it again next summer so you can see if your choice in books has changed or stayed the same. Happy reading!

Name

Age



Book I enjoyed most this summer:



The place where I most liked reading:



Best book I've ever read:



Favorite character:



Favorite author:



Favorite genre:



Book I hope to read next:





**DID YOU KNOW?**

According to one study, 12% of people said they always dream in black and white.



Research shows that sleep helps us form and store long-term memories.

## More sleep gives brains a boost

Sleep can improve your mood, keep your energy levels up, and allow you to concentrate better. Sleep also plays a crucial role in brain development for children. That's one reason newborn babies spend most of their time asleep.

Scientists have done a great deal of research on babies' sleep and adults' sleep—but they know much less about sleep in adolescents. These years are an important time for the development of young people's brains, but they're also a time when kids tend to start going to bed later and getting less sleep.

To find out more about the effect sleep has on adolescents, a team of researchers from China and the UK looked at data from the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study. The research involved 3,222 children, ages 11 and 12, who were given Fitbits. A Fitbit is a device that is worn on the wrist and monitors the body. It can tell when the person wearing it is asleep.

The children fell into three groups, with small differences in sleep times between them. The first group slept an average of seven hours and 10 minutes per night. The second group slept an average of seven hours and 21 minutes

a night. The third group slept for an average of seven hours and 25 minutes per night.

Across the three groups, there wasn't much difference in the performance of the children at school. However, there was a difference when certain tests were taken. The tests involved reading and problem-solving to see how the brain functions. The researchers found that group three did better than group two, and group two did better than group one. The results suggest that good sleep can help the brain function better.

Barbara Sahakian, a study author, said that although there were only small differences in the amount of sleep each group got, researchers "could still see differences in brain structure and activity and in how well [the children] did at tasks. This drives home to us just how important it is to have a good night's sleep at this important time in life."

Another author of the study, Wei Cheng, said, "We now need to look at why some children go to bed later and sleep less than others. Is it because of playing video games or smartphones, for example, or is it just that their body clocks do not tell them it's time to sleep until later?"



Babies need plenty of sleep.

### How the body goes to sleep



Serotonin and melatonin are chemicals in the body that are important for sleep. Serotonin, which does many jobs, is needed to produce melatonin. Melatonin signals to the body that it's the evening and time for sleep. The amount of melatonin the brain releases increases after dark and peaks in the middle of the night.

Melatonin plays an important role in managing the body's circadian rhythms, which are natural 24-hour cycles that carry out the body's essential functions. One circadian rhythm is the sleep-wake cycle, which decides how sleepy or alert you are. Scientists believe that daylight helps the body produce serotonin and melatonin, so spending time outdoors during the day might help you sleep better at night.





## Scientists identify a brand-new color

Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley, have discovered a new color that has never been seen by humans before. It's a blue-green color that they named "olo."

People see colors through a part of the eye called the retina. It has light-sensitive cells called rods and cones that send electrical signals to the brain. There are three types of cone cells, which detect red, green, or blue light. Usually, a cone that detects green can be activated at the same time as one or both of the other cones but not on its own.

The scientists developed a technique using a special green laser that stimulated only the green-detecting cones in people's eyes.

(Lasers can damage your eyes, so never shine one at yourself or anyone else.)

Every participant saw what researchers described as a "blue-green of unprecedented saturation."

Afterward, the participants did a color-matching test. They looked at olo and a second color they controlled by turning a dial until it matched olo as closely as possible.

Every person matched olo to a bright shade of a greenish blue. Unfortunately, olo can't be seen with the naked eye because natural light can't activate only the green-detecting cones.

Although olo won't be visible to the public anytime soon, the team hopes to use the technique to study issues such as color blindness and vision loss.



An artist's rendering of a mosasaur

### "Sea dragon" found in Mississippi

A fossil from the spine of a mosasaur—a prehistoric creature known as a "sea dragon"—was recently found in Mississippi. The fossil, discovered in a stream bed, may belong to the largest mosasaur ever found in the state.

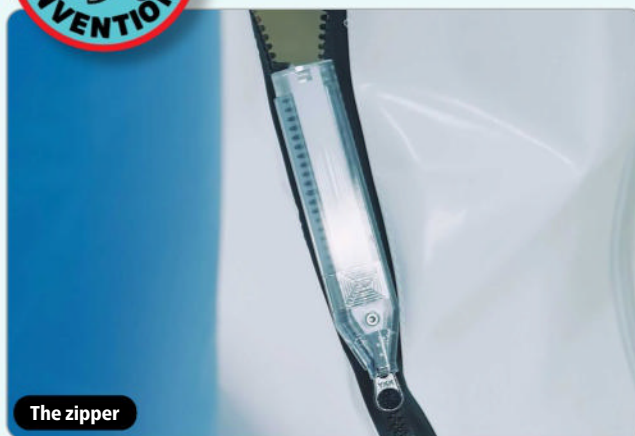
Mosasaurus were marine lizards that lived during the Cretaceous Period (145 million to 66 million years ago), while dinosaurs roamed the land. At the time, what is now Mississippi was largely covered in

warm, tropical waters. Mosasaurus were fast swimmers with up to 60 sharp teeth, making them a top predator in their habitat.

The spine bone is more than seven inches wide, and scientists believe it came from a creature that was at least 30 feet long. It was from a species called *Mosasaurus hoffmanni*, which was one of the largest mosasaurus, growing up to 50 feet long and likely weighing more than 20,000 pounds.



### A zipper that opens by remote control



The zipper

The world's largest zipper company, YKK, is testing a motorized, remote-controlled zipper that opens and closes at the touch of a button. Rather than being used on jackets and jeans, the zipper is designed to be used in industrial settings to keep workers safe. It could

also be used to help people with disabilities.

As the zipper moves, a mechanical screw hooks or unhooks the teeth to open or close it. In one test, it successfully operated on a tall tent, which a person could have reached only by standing on a high ladder.





# Sports

## SOCCER HISTORY

The first Champions League winner was crowned in 1956 when Real Madrid defeated Reims FC in the title game.



Paris Saint-Germain celebrates.

## Another major victory



On May 28, Chelsea made a second-half comeback to defeat Real Betis, 4–1, in the UEFA Conference League final. The victory made them the first club to win all four major European trophies: the Cup Winners' Cup, the Champions League, the Europa League, and the Conference League.

# PSG wins Champions League trophy

On May 31, the title-deciding match of the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Champions League was played at the Allianz Arena in Munich, Germany. The Champions League is an annual months-long competition among the top soccer clubs in Europe, and it is one of the most renowned soccer tournaments in the world. In the final, Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) beat Inter Milan, 5–0. It was the largest-ever margin of victory in a Champions League Final. The win marks the first Champions League title for PSG.

Ahead of this season, which began in September, the format of the competition was changed. One difference was how the first round is

organized. Instead of groups of four teams playing each other, the 36 teams each played a variety of teams in the new "league phase." The top eight from that phase automatically made the round of 16, and the others competed in knockout-phase playoffs.



Désiré Doué

PSG won France's Ligue 1 title this season. Although superstars such as Kylian Mbappé and Lionel Messi once played for PSG, they currently do not have any big stars on their roster. In Champions League play, they lost three of their eight league phase matches and had to play in the knockout phase. On their way to the final, they defeated three top English teams, including Liverpool, the 2024–25 English Premier League winners.

Inter plays in Italy's Serie A league and finished their season in second place. They won the Champions League in 2010 and made it into this season's final by defeating FC Barcelona in a thrilling match on May 6.

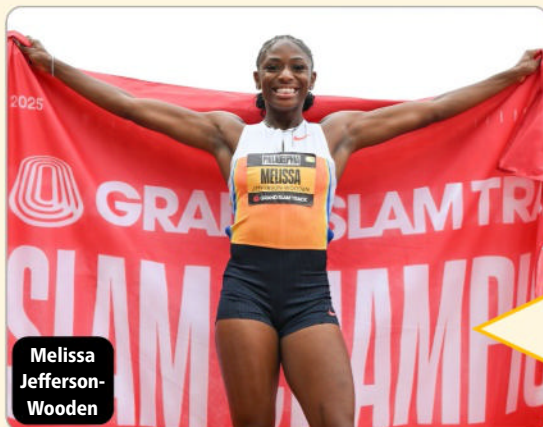
In the final, PSG took control early. Achraf Hakimi opened the scoring in the 12th minute after receiving a pass from 19-year-old Désiré Doué. Eight minutes later, Doué scored off an assist by Ousmane Dembélé. Doué scored again in the 63rd minute, and PSG's Khvicha Kvaratskhelia added a goal 10 minutes later. Senny Mayulu scored the team's fifth goal in the final minutes.

Doué was named Man of the Match. Dembélé received the Champions League Player of the Season award after compiling eight goals and six assists across 15 Champions League matches.

## THIS WEEK'S WINNERS...

### COLLEGE BASEBALL

There were two major upsets in the regionals of the NCAA men's baseball tournament, the lead-up to the Men's College World Series. On June 1, Wright State beat the number one team, Vanderbilt University, 5–4, knocking them out of the competition. The same day, the University of Texas at San Antonio beat and eliminated the number two team, the University of Texas, 7–4.



Melissa Jefferson-Wooden

### TENNIS

On June 1, Tommy Paul and Frances Tiafoe of the US each made the quarterfinals of the French Open, one of the four major tournaments in tennis. The last American man to make it that far was Andre Agassi in 2003.

### TRACK & FIELD

At Grand Slam Track Philadelphia, US sprinter Melissa Jefferson-Wooden won the 200 meters on May 31 and the 100 meters on June 1. She recorded a personal best time in both events.





## BIG MONEY

The prize for winning the US Women's Open was \$2.4 million, which is tied for the biggest prize ever in women's golf.



Maja Stark

## Exciting end to US Women's Open

The 80th US Women's Open—the oldest and most prestigious major championship in women's golf—took place at Erin Hills, a golf course in Erin, Wisconsin, from May 29 to June 1. It had a star-studded field that included 24 of the world's top 25 players, but the winner was Swedish golfer Maja Stark, who began the competition ranked 33rd. It is her first major title, and she is only the third Swedish player to win the US Women's Open and the first one since 2006.

There were 156 participants at this year's tournament. Among them were American Nelly Korda, the number one player in the world and a former Olympic gold medalist; New Zealand's Lydia Ko, the gold medalist at last year's Paris Olympics; and the US Women's Open's defending champion, Yuka Saso of Japan.

Stark delivered a calm and commanding performance across all four rounds she played. She began the final round 7 under par (the expected score) and maintained her advantage throughout the day. She even managed to hold off Korda, who started the final round trailing by three strokes. Korda had back-to-back birdies (one stroke under par) on the seventh and eighth holes and was close to tying things up on the ninth, but she missed the putt that would have done it.

Stark maintained her composure and, despite getting bogeys (one stroke over par) on the last two holes, finished the round with an even-par score of 72 to clinch the win. Her total score was two strokes ahead of Korda and Rio Takeda of Japan, who tied for second. Stark rose to number six in the world after the victory.

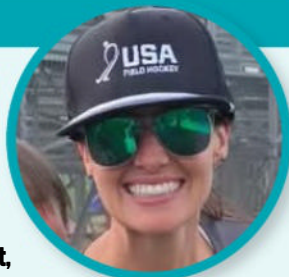


## COACH OF THE WEEK

Coach's Name: **Danielle Gabrish**

Team: **Hymax Bobcats (field hockey)**

**"Coach Danielle is the best coach ever! She doesn't just teach us how to play field hockey—she teaches us how to believe in ourselves. She pushes us to work hard, try our best, and never give up. She always tells us being a good teammate and a kind person is just as important as scoring goals. Coach Danielle is also a real scientist, which is super cool! She's someone I really look up to and trust. I'm so lucky to have her as my coach."** Layla Bowman, 11, Maryland



To nominate a Coach of the Week, send your coach's name, photo, sport, and team to [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com). Include your name, age, state, and a few reasons why your coach is great.

## SPOTLIGHT ON...



## Owen Michaels

AGE: 23 SPORT: ICE HOCKEY

TEAM: WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

**Taking the ice** My parents got me into hockey at a young age, and I fell in love with it right away. It's kind of my happy place. When I was younger, I was fortunate to be on some pretty good teams, and I saw some of the guys starting to have success. I always felt like I could be one of those guys, and luckily, I have been. It's been fun.

**Role models** As a big Detroit Red Wings fan, I always looked up to guys like Nick Lidström and Pavel Datsyuk.

**Tough luck** Early on, I got cut from a team. It was tough mentally, but it taught me a lot about myself and helped me grow as a person. Looking back, I'm glad I went through it. I learned that not everything in life is handed to you. It was a good eye-opener.

**Staying fit** We're on the ice pretty much six days a week for about two hours at a time, depending on how your body feels. In the summer, I rollerblade and play pickleball and tennis.

**Keeping cool** When there's a big game, all you can do is fall back on the work you've put in. Nerves are for the unprepared.

**Major moment** My biggest accomplishment was winning the national championship this year. There were a lot of emotions. It was a special feeling and one that I don't think I'll ever forget.

**Next goals** I want to continue to get better every day, develop into a leader, and ultimately turn into a pro. That's a dream I've always had.

**Wise words** Always believe in yourself.





**BOAT BEAST**  
Viking longships, also known as drakkars, often featured a carved dragon's head on their bow.

How to Train Your Dragon

## A new *How to Train Your Dragon*

The popular story about a Viking boy and his unlikely bond with a special creature is being retold in a live-action film.

In 2003, Cressida Cowell published her first *How to Train Your Dragon* book, and it went on to inspire popular animated films and TV shows. Now the story from the first movie is being retold in a live-action film with human actors and computer-generated (CGI) dragons. It arrives in theaters on June 13.

*How to Train Your Dragon* takes place in a fantasy world where Hiccup, a Viking boy, refuses to go along with his tribe's tradition of hunting dragons. Despite his father's disapproval, he becomes friends

with a giant flying dragon named Toothless, and they team up to help stop a war.

The new film was co-written and directed by Dean DeBlois, who did the same for the original animated film and its sequel. He told *The Week Junior* that one reason the films have been popular is because many people can relate to the way Hiccup "can put up with ridicule and still follow his heart." He also thinks audiences wish that they, too, could have a bond with an amazing creature.

There are some differences between the new film and the original.



Dean DeBlois

DeBlois said not all the CGI dragons look like their animated counterparts, for example, although Toothless has not changed much. In fact, the team closely watched the animated movie to make sure his personality stayed the same. Some of Toothless's behaviors, DeBlois said, were based on cats and dogs. To ensure that the actors' reactions to the creatures looked natural, they performed opposite foam dragons operated by puppeteers.

DeBlois hopes kids who see the film are "thrilled by the adventure" and appreciate Hiccup's bravery. He said, "Hiccup is a hero for all the people who sometimes feel like they don't belong or that they have to change who they are to fit in."

### 3 facts about the franchise



#### Original idea

Author Cressida Cowell said *How to Train Your Dragon* was inspired by her childhood summers on a small island near Scotland (above). When she heard stories about Vikings invading the area, she imagined dragons lived there.

#### Creature inspiration

The dragons in the films were based on animals such as tropical birds, hippos, and walruses. Toothless, a Night Fury dragon, was originally inspired by a black panther, a salamander, and even the alien Stitch from *Lilo & Stitch*.



#### Popular concerts

For the past 15 years, orchestras around the world have been holding concerts that combine a screening of *How to Train Your Dragon* with a live performance of the film's music. There are several scheduled in the US this summer and fall.





**WOW!**

Giant kelp in the ocean can grow to be about 215 feet tall, which is close to the size of a 20-story building.

**A humpback whale**  
in *Ocean with David Attenborough*



## Breathtaking look at ocean life

For decades, world-famous naturalist Sir David Attenborough has been helping people learn about Earth's wonders. In a new documentary, *Ocean with David Attenborough*, he shares knowledge about the world under the sea, how it's changing, and why it must be protected. Attenborough, who recently turned 99 years old, says in the film, "After living for nearly a hundred years on this planet, I now understand that the most important place on Earth is not on land but at sea." The documentary premieres on National Geographic on June 7 and begins streaming on Disney+ and Hulu the next day, which is World Oceans Day.

*Ocean* was shot in locations including Hawaii, the UK, Indonesia, Antarctica, and the Mediterranean, and it took more than two years to make. Thanks to high-tech cameras and innovative

filming techniques, it gives viewers a rare look at life in the water. Some of the film's most beautiful scenes feature yellowfin tuna, whales, giant kelp, coral, plankton, and animals that look like plants. However, the film also shows the harm humans are doing to the oceans through fishing. One especially destructive method is bottom trawling, which involves dragging nets across the ocean floor and ripping up everything along the way. The damage can be seen from the sky.



Sir David Attenborough

Still, the film has a hopeful message and reveals that oceans can recover faster than many people thought. The key is protecting areas so their plants and sea life can return. "I truly believe that if millions of people see this film, we could make history," said director and producer Toby Nowlan. "We could fully protect a third of the ocean and change the course of our future."



### READER RECOMMENDS



**Girl Meets World** (Stream on Disney+ or buy on Apple TV+) "This awesome show is a sequel to the popular 1990s sitcom *Boy Meets World*, which was about a boy named Cory Matthews. Now he has grown up to be a teacher and has a daughter, Riley. The show follows her on hilarious adventures through middle school and high school. Riley is a sweet girl who always looks on the bright side. Her best friend is rebellious Maya, who is played by pop star Sabrina Carpenter. Their friends include quirky and smart Farkle; Lucas, a new boy who moved from Texas; and Smackle, the school's debate champion. It's a great show to binge-watch." Zoe, 9, Illinois

Do you have a film or TV show to recommend to other kids? Send your review to [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com).



### THIS WEEK'S WATCH LIST



#### Wylde Park (Paramount+)

This new series from *The Loud House* creators is about half-siblings Jack and Lily. He is a rule follower and she is a free spirit, and they are living together for the first time. They have wild adventures, help run the family's pet-grooming business, and learn to embrace their differences.



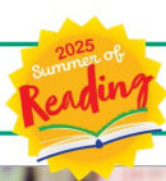
#### Captain America: Brave New World (Disney+)

In the fourth *Captain America* film, the superhero is now Sam Wilson, who used to be The Falcon. When Sam meets the newly elected US President, Thaddeus Ross, he is tasked with uncovering a plot involving the rise of Red Hulk, which could destabilize the world.



#### The Chameleon Queen (PBS)

Fandresena Rakotoharimalala is the first herpetologist (scientist who studies amphibians and reptiles) from Madagascar to lead genetic research on chameleons. This episode of *Nature* follows along as she works to protect her country's 130 species from extinction.



## How to...



**READY TO READ**

Approximately 3 million new books are published in the US each year.

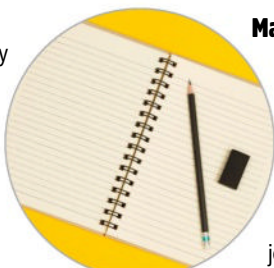
# Start a reading journal

Explore your thoughts and ideas about books with this easy activity.

A reading journal is a great way to keep track of books you might like to read, express your opinions about stories you have read, and look back on how your reading interests have evolved. Your personal reading journal can be anything you would like it to be—no one is grading it! Another reason to keep a journal: Research suggests that it helps you reduce stress and connect with your creative side. Here's how you can get started.

### Pick a journal

You might like a lined notebook that is easy to carry around in a backpack, or maybe you'd prefer an art sketchbook with blank pages if you think you might like to doodle in your journal. It's helpful if your journal has a spiral binding so it stays open easily as you write. A notebook you've already written in can also work. Just rip out the used pages before you begin.



You can start with a notebook.

### Divide your journal by section

One idea for organizing your journal is to use the front and the back of the journal for different purposes. You could dedicate the front of the journal to short reviews of books you're currently reading. Include what you liked or didn't like about the plot,

characters, and writing. Then use the back of the journal to start a list of books you would like to read.

### Create entries

The only rule of journaling is there truly are no rules! In addition to book reviews and a list of books to read, you might want to write down your favorite sentences from a book as you read it. If you like, draw what you imagine the book's characters or settings to look like.

### Make it a habit

Many benefits of journaling are gained by doing it on a regular basis. Some people choose to make writing in their journal a part of their daily routine, by doing it after school or before bedtime. Try to make entries—even short ones—in your journal at least three times a week.

### Reflect on your reading

After you have created a few journal entries, look for patterns in your reading habits. You might notice that you prefer a certain book genre, like fantasy novels, sports biographies, or historical fiction. Whatever you discover can help you decide what kind of book you might like to read next or inspire you to try something completely new.

## Arrange your books



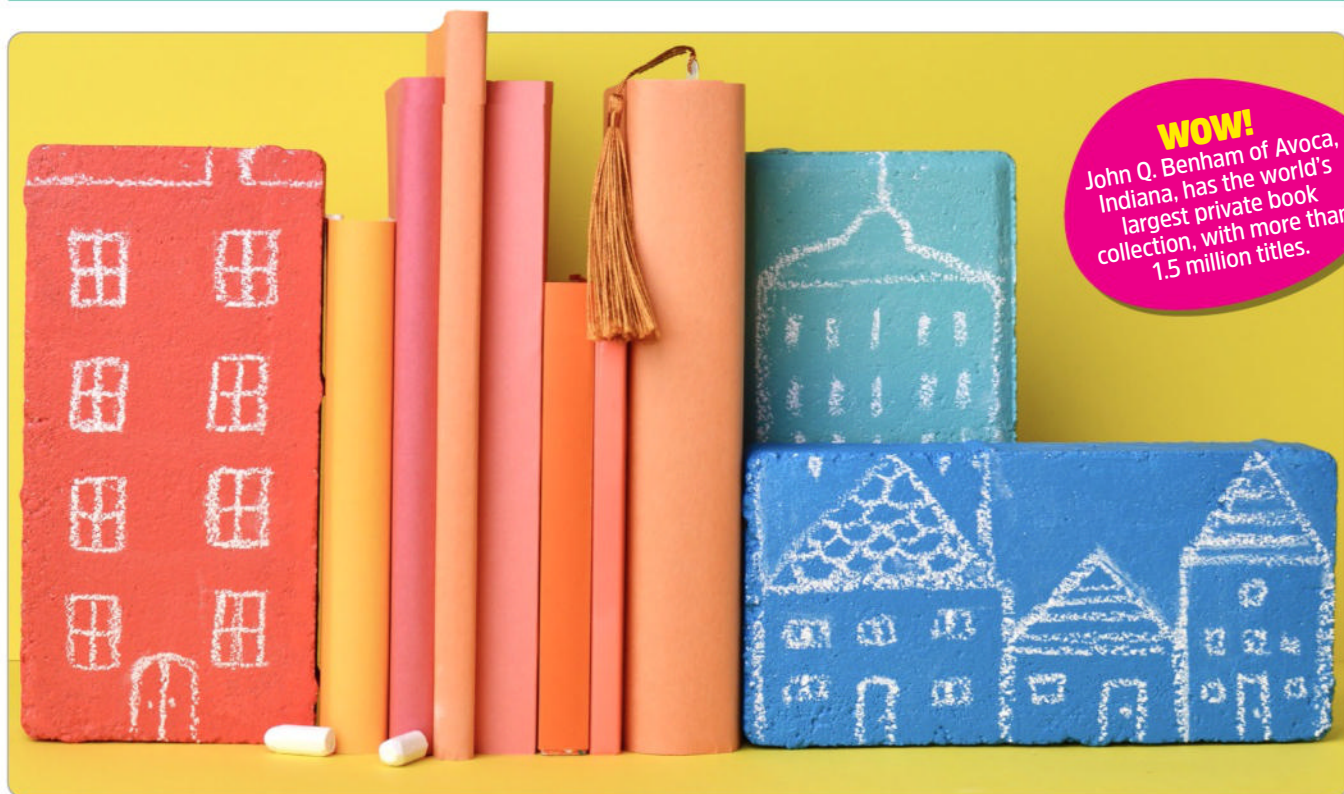
You can organize your books on a shelf any way you like! Here are a few ideas for inspiration.

Color coded You might enjoy the pleasing pop of books sorted into groups by color. This is one creative way to personalize your shelves.

Alphabetically You can arrange your books on a shelf alphabetically according to the author's last name. This makes it easier to find a book by a favorite writer later.

By genre Your library has sections for mysteries, history, and more. If you have a lot of books, you can organize them into sections at home, too!





**WOW!**  
John Q. Benham of Avoca, Indiana, has the world's largest private book collection, with more than 1.5 million titles.

## Make brightly colored bookends from bricks

### What you'll need

- Bricks, left over from home projects or purchased from a home improvement store (look for inexpensive bricks or concrete blocks)
- Cardboard, such as from a shipping box, to protect your work surface
- Optional: primer (like gesso) to create brighter colors
- Paintbrush
- Chalkboard paint
- Chalk
- Optional: felt, scissors, and white glue (to make a soft bottom)

### Instructions

1. Cover your work surface with cardboard. If you'd like, paint the bricks with primer—except for the small side that will become the bottom. As a shortcut, you can paint only the sides that will show. Allow the primer to dry completely.
2. Paint the bricks on the top and long sides with chalkboard paint. Let dry.
3. Use chalk to draw or write whatever you'd like on the bricks—buildings, flowers, notes, or reminders.
4. Optional: To keep the bricks from scratching surfaces, add a protective layer to the bottom. Place the brick on a piece of felt and trace around the bottom. Cut out the shape and glue it to the bottom of the brick.



### ECO TIP OF THE WEEK

### HOST A USED BOOK SALE FOR CHARITY

You may have books in your home that you no longer need. One way to make room on your bookshelves—while keeping your books out of a landfill—is to host your own used book sale and donate what you raise to a cause you care about. First, decide on a charity to donate to. With an adult's help, set a date and time for the sale. Then make signs to post around your neighborhood. On the day of the sale, organize books on a table or in boxes by genre, such as "middle grade mysteries" or "graphic novels." Post a sign that lists prices. Afterward, bring any books that don't get sold to a community donation center that accepts them.



Give old books  
a new home.



# Puzzles



## Word ladder

To change the word BOOK into the word MARK, use each clue to fill in a word that is only one letter different from the word before it. If you get stuck, try solving from the bottom up.



Item you might hang your coat on

B O O K

Sound from an owl

Person who welcomes you to a party

Put a story on Instagram, for example

It's discussed in history class

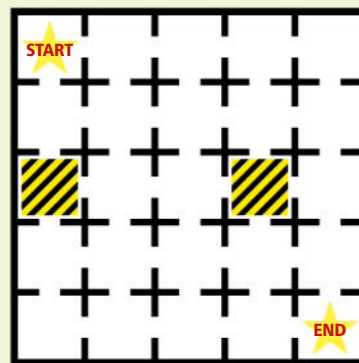
Role in a play

City area with trees and benches

M A R K

## DO NOT ENTER

Draw one continuous path from START to END that goes through every box except the ones containing obstacles. Your path may not cross itself, and there is only one solution. (NEED A HINT? Check the bottom of the page.)



## STEPPING STONES

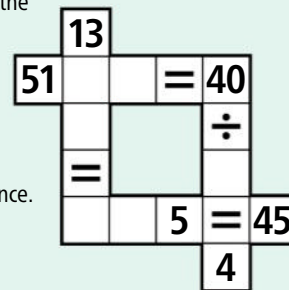
Each figure hides the name of a seven-letter section of a bookstore. To find each one, start anywhere and move in an unbroken path through letters that share a border (no jumping!), using each letter once.



ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 29.

## Crossmath

Fill each empty box with a number or a mathematical symbol (+, -, ×, or ÷) to complete the equations across and down. A symbol can be used more than once.



## Spot the difference

These two pictures of summer reading appear to be the same, but take a closer look. There are actually five differences. Can you see them?





# That's unbelievable!



Woof hard,  
play hard.

## A fabulous festival for dogs

For two days at the Goodwood estate in England, 12,000 dogs were treated like royalty. At the annual Goodwoof festival, pet pooches enjoyed lapdog luxuries, like a spa and massage parlor, and activities such as doga (yoga for dogs). A Bavarian oompah band led a parade of 600 dachshunds, and famous authors presented readings of dog-themed works. "It is not a dog show," said the Duke of Richmond, who founded the pet extravaganza. "It's a dog event unlike any other."



It's fast food  
that floats!

## Creative burger-making in space

There are no restaurants at the International Space Station. So when astronaut Jonny Kim started craving a cheeseburger while orbiting 250 miles above Earth, he had to get creative. Using ingredients available in the floating laboratory, Kim put a piece of beef steak on some "wheat snack bread" and topped it with cheese potatoes and gochujang red pepper paste. After gluing the whole thing together with cheese spread, he took a photo of his "burger" for social media. "This hits the spot in its own way," Kim wrote.



A fun way to let  
off some steam

## Gaming on a getaway

A UK railway operator recently created a new experience for video game fans called the Ultimate Gaming Train. Hoping to encourage more young people to become interested in trains, the Kent and East Sussex Railway converted one of its antique train cars into a gaming zone filled with TV screens and consoles. For several days in May, passengers could play video games and racing simulators as the classic steam train chugged along, then sit back and enjoy countryside views during a return journey.

Real or  
fake?



Odor up?

## Sweet armpits fill the streets

There was a strange spectacle in New York City last month as people stopped in the middle of the sidewalk to scratch and sniff large photographs of armpits. The posters had been put up around the city to advertise a new deodorant. Curious commuters inhaled the sweet scents of vanilla, coconut, and sandalwood before continuing on their way. "Love the fresh smell of pits in the morning," one TikTok user said about the experience. Is this story real, or do you smell a lie?\*

\*Real! Billie, a company that makes personal hygiene products, created the campaign to launch a tropical-inspired deodorant. Billboards were placed in pedestrian areas throughout the city for passersby to scratch and sniff.





# Your turn

## Editor's note

As the days get warmer, all of us at *The Week Junior* have one thing on our minds: our Summer of Reading campaign! The highlight is our list of "The 50 Books Kids Love Most." All the titles are recommended by kids your age, and you can read what they have to say starting on page 12. We celebrate books elsewhere in the issue too! Check out our debate "Is it better to read before bed?" (p8), and find out how to keep a reading journal and make bookends in our How To section (p24). Even our puzzles (p26) have a book theme! The program continues for five more issues as we feature interviews with our Author Ambassadors: Pablo Cartaya, Grace Lin, Meg Medina, SF Said, and Rita Williams-Garcia (p15). We thank them for participating and invite you to meet them at our virtual event—get the details in the box below. Finally, enter our challenge for a chance to win books (p12). We hope you'll join the fun. Happy reading!

Mindy Walker  
Executive editor



Sowmiya, 13, New Jersey

## For the love of books

“As an avid reader, I am always looking for interesting books to read. This inspired me to connect with other young people like me. I developed a website to spotlight books I liked and spread the word about it at my school and local library. This resulted in more than 2,300

views. I read every book I recommend, and they are some of my all-time favorites. They include novels and illustrated books. My goal is to make my website the first stop for elementary and middle school students to find their next read.”

Have you done something interesting or raised money for a cause you care about? Whatever you're up to, we want to hear about it at [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com).

**RIDDLE OF THE WEEK**  
What can you keep without ever having it?  
Someone else's secret

## CHARITY OF THE WEEK



### Reach Out and Read

This organization's goal is to foster a love of reading among children. It uses visits to the doctor's office as an opportunity to encourage parents to read books aloud to their children at home. It also supports families through book giveaways, recommendations, and reading tips. The group benefits about 4.6 million kids across the US every year. Find out more at [reachoutandread.org](http://reachoutandread.org).



## Meet your favorite authors!

On June 12 at 7 p.m. ET, the editors of *The Week Junior* will be hosting a special virtual event for families! We will be kicking off our 2025 Summer of Reading program with a panel discussion featuring four acclaimed middle-grade authors who have exciting books coming out this summer. Attendees can discover how their favorite authors come up with story ideas, illustrate their work, and more. You can RSVP for this free event and learn more about it at [tinyurl.com/TWJUS-AuthorEvent](https://tinyurl.com/TWJUS-AuthorEvent). We hope to see you there!



THE WEEK  
Junior

IT'S YOUR TURN

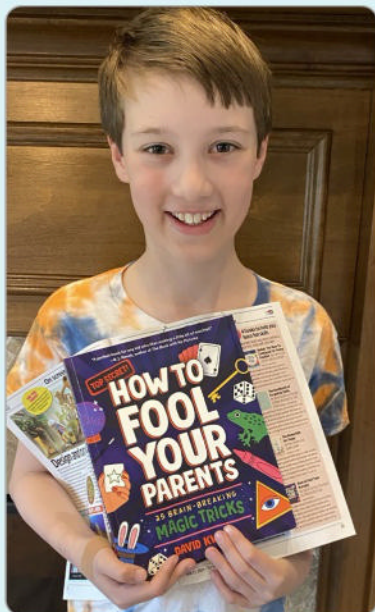
Email your news, views, and photos to [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com).





## YOUR RECENT READS

Thank you to everyone who sent us photos of themselves with a book they've enjoyed. If there's a title you want to share, including from our Summer of Reading list (p12), have an adult email a photo to [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com).



"I enjoyed reading *How to Fool Your Parents!*" Adrian, 10, Kentucky

"*Remarkably Ruby* is an awesome graphic novel about two girls navigating friendship."  
Elliet, 9, Michigan



"I liked *Ten Thousand Tries* by Amy Makechnie because it's about soccer and not giving up." Miles, 10, New Hampshire



## Teacher OF THE WEEK

Teacher's Name: **Mrs. Dennler**

School: **Eastampton Community School**

"I want to nominate my library teacher, Mrs. Dennler. She is super supportive, helpful, and kind. She wants to make sure everyone is following directions but also gets the help they need. She has amazing books and displays. She also lets us choose the books we want to read in the library. Mrs. Dennler is the best teacher ever!"

Charlotte, 10, New Jersey

**Nominate your teacher for Teacher of the Week!**

**Send your reason for the nomination, a photo of your teacher, and your school's name and address to [hello@theweekjunior.com](mailto:hello@theweekjunior.com).**



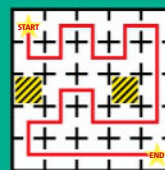
## Puzzle answers (from page 26)

### Word ladder

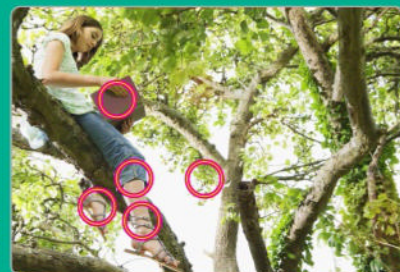
BOOK  
HOOK  
HOOT  
HOST  
POST  
PAST  
PART  
PARK  
MARK

### Stepping stones

fantasy, mystery



13			
51	-	11	= 40
4			÷
=			10
9	×	5	= 45
			4



### Quiz answers (from page 30)

1 Mexico City 2 False. Olo is bluish green. 3 b) Meg Medina 4 a) MoM-z14 5 True 6 c) 99  
7 Sea dragons 8 a) 1970 9 True 10 Fantasy/science fiction 11 c) Montana 12 Ensemble  
13 False. Female bonobos won 61% of the time. 14 c) 100th 15 Cheeseburger

We want to hear from you! To have your letters, photos, nominations, recommendations, or ideas considered for inclusion in the magazine, please include your first name, age, and state with your submission. By emailing your submission to us, you give *The Week Junior* consent to publish it in the magazine and online. Please get your parent/guardian's permission before sending anything to us.



# Quiz

## How much of this week's news can you remember?

1 In what international city were axolotls successfully released into the wild?

2 True or false? Scientists discovered a new color called "olo" that is reddish brown.

True ☐ False ☐

3 Which of our Author Ambassadors was the National Ambassador for Young People's Literature in 2023-24?

- a) Grace Lin  
b) Meg Medina  
c) Pablo Cartaya

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

4 What is the name of the most distant galaxy ever observed, which was recently spotted by the James Webb Space Telescope?

- a) MoM-z14 b) DaD-z14 c) SiS-z14

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

5 True or false? Maja Stark's recent US Open win was her first major golf tournament victory.

True ☐ False ☐

6 How old is the famous naturalist Sir David Attenborough?

- a) 77 b) 88 c) 99

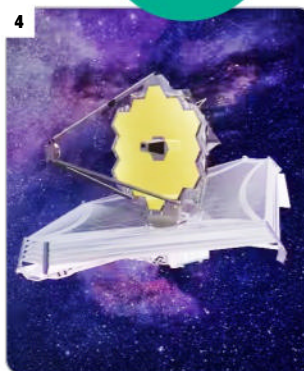
a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

7 Prehistoric creatures called mosasaurs are also known by what name?

8 In what year was the first Pride March for the LGBTQ+ community held?

- a) 1970 b) 1978 c) 1999

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐



9 True or false? Some of the behavior of Toothless the dragon in the new live-action film *How to Train Your Dragon* was based on cats and dogs.

True ☐ False ☐

10 In a recent poll, what genre of children's books did *The Week Junior*'s readers say was their favorite?

11 In which US state did a group of young activists recently file a climate lawsuit against the federal government?

- a) Minnesota  
b) Mississippi  
c) Montana

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

12 What is the name of artist Jennie C. Jones' new installation on the rooftop of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City?

13 True or false? Researchers observed that when male and female bonobos had a conflict, males won 61% of the time.

True ☐ False ☐

14 The Scripps National Spelling Bee is celebrating what anniversary this year?

- a) 50th  
b) 75th  
c) 100th

a ☐ b ☐ c ☐

15 NASA astronaut Jonny Kim made a creative version of what food on the International Space Station?

ANSWERS  
CAN BE  
FOUND ON  
PAGE 29.

## THE WEEK Junior

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TO JOIN THE FUN



2025  
Summer of  
**Reading**

# Keep kids reading all summer long!

*The Week Junior* invites our readers to jump into a summer of super adventures through our Summer of Reading challenge.

Reading can take kids anywhere they can think of. They can be the hero of a thousand stories, this summer and beyond.

Bring along a friend, create a summer book club, or give a gift of *The Week Junior* and treat another child to a summer of reading adventures.

Makes  
a great  
gift!

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**CHANGE  
ARTIST**

The cabbage white caterpillar feeds on vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower. Eventually, it transforms into a white butterfly.